Tibor WEISZ (1914—1983)

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In memoriam Tibor WEISZ
(1914—1983)

Tibor WEISZ, head of the Natural History Department of the Šarišské Museum at Bardejov and an outstanding person in Slovak museology, died suddenly on 9 June, 1983 at an age of 69. His original, colourful personality and many-sided professional activities were widely appreciated not only in Slovakia but also in Hungary.

He was born on 16 April, 1914 in Bártfa (Bardejov). He received his secondary school education in Budapest. As a young student interested in ornithology he often visited the workshop of the taxodermist FÁBA. Here he became acquianted with Miklós VASVÁRI, who in 1928 introduced him to the staff of the Ornithological Institute. He was in contact with the then director of the institute, Jakab SCHENK, and Imre PÁTKAI and András KEVE. In his spare time he often visited Jenő GRESCHIK in the Zoological Department of the Hungarian Natural History Museum, who himself had come from Upper Northern Hungary and was happy to see his fellow countryman. He soon had become an everyday visitor to the Museum. In these years he studied the Lágymányosi lake in Budapest. He obtained permission from the tenant of the lake, János BAJCSI, to collect birds for the Ornithological Institute and the Hungarian Natural History Museum.

He entered the Faculty of Arts and Science of the József Ferenc University (now Attila József University) in Szeged, from where he graduated with a degree in pharmacy in 1942. As a student he of course was part of the company of the renowned Szeged ornithologist, Péter BERETZK, and accompanied him on his trips to the Fehér lake. He spent his holidays in the Biological Institute at Tihany where he photographed the birds of Lake Balaton.

At the end of the Second World War, he returned to his birthplace in 1945. He worked as a pharmacist but spent all his spare time outdoors with a pair of binoculars strapped around his neck and a gun on his shoulder. His dream to work as a zoologist was soon to be fulfilled. He worked in the Presov District Museum from 1952, and then from 1956 till his death in the Šarišské Museum.

During his active career of thirty years Tibor WEISZ accummulated an unbelievable amount and quality of zoological material. His collection included material not only from his country, but also from all over Europe and even other continents. He was an expert collector and curator widely known. Among his accessions outstanding are the molluscs from the Balkan and molluscs and birds from Cuba.

Parts of his collection are among the best in Europe (e. g. large mammals, carnivores). These are the valuable assets of the Šarišské Museum, the professional in heritance from Tibor WEISZ. The natural history exhibitions in the Bardejov Museum are classics of museum public education. It is a pity that he did not live to see the completion of the new natural history exhibition that had been so close to his heart in his lifetime.

Tibor WEISZ had been in close contact with the Zoological Department of the Hungarian Natural History Museum throughout his life. He often asked Hungarian zoologists to identify some of his collections (e. g. molluscs). He organized smaller expeditions to collect in his study area in Slovakia. The last series of field trips that he helped to organize is a research programme in the Čergov Mts, a co-operation between Hungarian and Slovakian zoologists to study small mammals and their parasites. His sudden death is a loos not only to Czechoslovak museology but also to his friends and colleagues in Hungary.

We shall keep his memory with reverence.

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